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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS AND RADIO NEWS BRIEFING, FRIDAY,
OCTOBER 12, 1962, 12:23 p.m., EDT

MR. WHITE: Good afternoon.

Q You know this is Columbus Day, don't you,
Linc?

A Yes, I do. And I wish everybody a Happy
Columbus Day, and particularly the Giants. Has the rain
washed that out?

Q Yes.

A Oh, well.

We have three releases, gentlemen, that are
being distributed to you now.

The first, No. 619, is an address by Assistant
Secretary Harlan Cleveland, before the 22nd Meeting of
the US National Commission for UNESCO, at the Penn-Sheraton
Hotel in Pittsburgh; for publication at 7:30.

No. 618 is an address by Assistant Secretary G.
Mennen Williams, before the Fifth Annual Meeting of the
African Studies Association at the Mayflower at nine
tonight.

No. 620, the visit to the United States by the
Polish Minister of Agriculture.

[Please refer to Press Releases Nos. 618, 619
and 620; all dated October 12, 1962.]

We will also have for you, later in the day, the itinerary of the visit to the United States of Crown Prince Hasan of Libya, who is arriving on Tuesday, the 16th.

That's all I have, gentlemen.

Q Linc, has the State Department received any sort of complaint or statement of concern from the British Government about the sort of small war o. ALPHA 66 on shipping?

A Well, John, this matter has been raised by the British Embassy here in Washington in connection with attacks by Cuban exile groups on British ships.

Q "Ship"--singular?

A Ships.

You will recall that there was an attack on the--what was the name of the ship?--the NEW LANE (is that correct?) a few weeks ago.

In any case, the British were assured that these attacks do not have the sanction of the United States Government.

Now, I might just add to that: that with respect to the reported raid by ALPHA 66 on Cuba, we have no information on this other than press reports. Therefore, it would be necessary to find out if the raid took place, as reported, before anyone here could reach conclusions on whether or not any US law had been violated.

I would like to make clear, however, that Cuban exiles reside in many places outside the United States, all around the Caribbean. And the United States cannot assume responsibility for acts committed by Cuban exiles who have left from points not under our jurisdiction; nor do we investigate all reports of alleged raids.

Furthermore--

Q Linc, I'm sorry.

Q We are way behind you.

A These Cubans reside in many places all around the Caribbean. And the United States cannot assume responsibility for acts committed by Cuban exiles who have left from points not under our jurisdiction; nor do we investigate all reports of alleged raids.

Furthermore, you gentlemen, I assume, are aware that the Coast Guard, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service, have for months had programs designed to prevent incidents, based on United States territory, from taking place. It should also--

Q --to prevent incidents. What comes after?

A --prevent incidents, based on US territory, from taking place.

In this connection, however, you must bear in mind that there are literally thousands of miles of coastline to patrol, and in the Florida area alone there are thousands

of pleasure boats down there.

Q --literally thousands of miles or--

A --coastline to patrol, and in the Florida area alone there are several thousand pleasure boats.

What I am saying, in effect, is that there is no absolute guarantee against any incident taking place.

Q Link, do we now have anything to say on the reports out of Bonn yesterday about our urging West Germans to keep troops available to send in?

A Yes. We have not discussed with the West Germans any new military role for them outside NATO. The commitment of NATO to support the position of the three Western Allies in Berlin is well-known. And we are confident that every NATO member, including the German Federal Republic, will meet its full share of that commitment.

Now the question of how, or under what circumstance, NATO troops might be involved is a subject which I am just not going to discuss.

Q Link, if we can return to this British shipping for a moment.

A Yes.

Q I think, as we mentioned to you yesterday, this ALPHA 00 group has said that it is going to attack shipping from all sides from here on. Was it in this connection that the British came in--to ask what was going

on, and what we could do?

A No, it was in connection with the earlier incident.

Q Well, there is only one incident that I am aware of. You talked about "ships_."

A Well, that was--

MR. BISHOP: There were three ships involved. There was a British, and two Cuban ships involved in the first incident.

A As far as British ships_ are concerned, that's my fault. It should be ship--singular.

Q What was the date of that?

A Does anyone recall the date of this?

MR. REAP: It was in early September.

Q Well, Line, what you are saying in this comment, as I get it, is that the British have expressed concern to the United States Government about this situation arising out of this incident? Is that correct?

✓ *True. W* A That's correct.

Q And that the United States has replied that it is not able to give the British any reasonable assurance of protection for shipping in that area, as a result of operations which might arise from anti-Castro elements.

A Well, all I am saying here, John, is that the British were assured that these attacks do not have

the sanction of the United States Government.

Now I added, in that connection, with respect to ALPHA 66, and to others that: some of these may not be under any jurisdiction of the United States whatsoever; that, for months, agencies of the United States Government have been attempting to prevent incidents arising out of departures from United States soil. But that there is the practical problem of the extensive shorelines involved, and the number of boats in this area, etc.

Q Yes. Well, now did the British then give any indication--as some of the reports from London suggest--that they may begin escorting their shipping?

A We have had no indication of that, John. This was purely, as I say, taking the matter up with us.

Q Well, Iinc, as a practical matter, what would happen if some of the Navy ships that we have in the Caribbean area see some pleasure craft shooting at a British freighter, for example? Would they be under instructions to stop this? Or what?

A John, I am not going to look into any crystal balls.

Q Well, do the Naval craft operating in the Caribbean area have instructions to check on unidentified pleasure craft; that sort of thing?

A I will say, OFF THE RECORD, that they have

✓ instructions to check and to identify all crart. *End of Record.*

Q Lino, did you investigate the incidents of the last month?

A Joe will have to help me out on that. I wasn't here.

MR. REAP: You mean the shooting up or the British?

A Yes.

MR. REAP: Well, we didn't here. We just don't have facilities. As I told you then, the Department of Justice, and other agencies, had looked into it. And, as I understand, they came up with nothing. And, remember, at that time, I pointed out to you (you might not remember, some of the other gentlemen with gray hairs around here will remember) the massive difficulties we had controlling our coastline in connection with the liquor prohibition laws.

Q Lino, would your statement--

Mr. W

A Gentlemen, with gray hairs will remember

~~this very far--~~ *their thirst in those days.*

Q How about gentlemen with no hair?

A Well, gentlemen with no hair now probably had some then.

[Laughter]

Q Lino, I am still a little puzzled about the

state of exchange between London and Washington on this thing.

A Yes.

Q It seemed to me logical that the British Government would be asking the United States Government to take whatever steps were possible to avoid a repetition of the incident. Is that correct?

A John, I am afraid you will have to ask the British that. What I have given you is everything I know about it.

Q Yes.

Q Linc, was it the ALPHA 66 that attacked this ship?

A Yes. I say that they reported that they had attacked this ship.

Q And what was the name of the vessel? The British vessel.

A NEW LANE, or something like that.

Q NEW LANE.

A I think it is the NEW LANE, N-E-W L-A-N-E.

Q Well, Linc, would we assume that the investigation into this latest reported incident is continuing? Is that it? And we don't have any solid information yet on whether an incident actually took place.

A Well, I cannot speak for other agencies.

This Department has no information on it whatsoever, as I told you yesterday; which is the same situation as of this morning.

Q This Department wouldn't make the investigation; some other Department would? You suggest here--

A Gentlemen, let's get one thing absolutely clear here: I can speak only for State Department.

Q Yes. But you suggest here that it would be necessary to find out if the raid took place, as reported?

A That's right.

Q Well, who should do that?

A Well, there are agencies of the Government who can do that. And you will recall that in the other incidents, as Joe has told you, that no information to confirm or deny this raid was ever forthcoming.

Q Line, in connection with this whole problem does the Department have any comment on the complaints by the British and the Norwegian shippers against these restrictions which the United States is going to put into effect on Cuban shipping?

A No. We have had no representations made to us by any government on this.

Q You mean about the four points?

A That's right.

Q Line, if I can go back to Berlin again--